

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 OMB-01 AID-05 EUR-12 SAJ-01 EB-07

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 /087 W

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P R 020532Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1530

INFO /USIA WASHDC 1532

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

9/AMCONSUL MADRAS 2969

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 13250

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT:GOI CENSORS THE COMMUNIST PRESS ON CRITICAL ECONOMIC
ISSUES

REF: NEW DELHI 13251

1. AS REPORTEDIN REFTEL, THE PRO-CPI LEFT PRESS HAS BEEN ENJOYING AN APPARENT EXCEPTION FROM THE CENSORSHIP RULES TO ATTACK THE UNITED STATES. WE NOW HAVE EVIDENCE THAT THE LICENSE OF THE LEFT, PARTICULARLY THE CPI, TO "DO ITS OWN THING" IS NOT WITHOUT LIMITS AND THAT WHERE INTERESTS DEEMED IMPORTANT TO THE GOI ARE AT STAKE, THE GOVERNMENT WILL DISCIPLINE THE COMMUNISTS.

2. THE GOI'S

CHIEF CENSOR, HARRY J. D'PENHA, TOLD THE CHARGE THAT THE PRESS HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED NOT TO PRINT AGITATIONAL COMMENTS OF LABOR LEADERS CONCERNING THE GOI'S RECENT DECISION REDUCING THE MINIMUM PERCENTAGE FOR ANNUAL BONUSES FROM 8.33, WHICH WAS PAID LAST YEAR, TO 4. THE NEW POLICY IS INTENDED BY THE GOI TO LINK THE BONUS TO PRODUCTIVITY, WHEREAS IN THE PAST IT HAD BEEN
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CONSIDERED A DEFERRED WAGE PAYMENT. (DETAILS TO BE REPORTED SEP-

ARATELY.) THIS REDEFINITION OF BONUS AND THE LOWERING OF THE MINIMUM ARE PART OF THE GOI'S ANTI-INFLATIONARY ECONOMIC ORIENTATION.

3. ACCORDING TO D'PENHA, THE CPI DAILY "PATRIOT" WAS GOING TO EDITORIALIZE AGAINST THE NEW BONUS POLICY, AND THE GOVERNMENT CENSORS INTERVENED TO BAN THE COMMENT. "PATRIOT'S" REACTION REACTION HAS BEEN TO OMIT EDITORIALS FROM ITS ISSUES BEGINNING SEPT. 27.

4. "PATRIOT" HAD PREVIOUSLY FOUND ITSELF ON THE CENSOR'S "CARPET" FOR AN EDITORIAL IT RAN ON SEPT. 12 ATTACKING FINANCE MINISTER SUBRAMANIAM AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN AS "EXPERT BEGGARS" AND "AID BOOT-LICKERS" FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S.

5. COMMENT: THE ABOVE TWO INSTANCES WHERE THE CPI PRESS HAS BEEN DISCIPLINED DEMONSTRATE THAT THE COMMUNISTS WILL BE RESTRAINED WHERE THEY ARE TREADING ON INTERESTS DEEMED IMPORTANT BY THE GOI. THIS IS CONTRARY TO THE SURFACE PICTURE OF COMPLETE

HARMONY BETWEEN THE CPI AND THE GOVERNMENT. DESPITE LOUD PROTESTS BY BOTH COMMUNIST AND CONGRESS TRADE UNION LEADERS OVER THE BONUS POLICY, THE GOI HAS INDICATED THAT THIS IS AN AREA WHERE IT WILL NOT TOLERATE CRITICISM. SIMILARLY, THE GOI HAS CLEARLY INDICATED THAT IT WISHES TO MAXIMIZE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THE FORTHCOMING WASHINGTON TALKS AND THE COMMUNISTS HAVE NO LICENSE TO BELITTLE THIS POLICY; AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GANDHI GOVERNMENT AND THE CPI WILL BE FOUND IN HOW THE COMMUNIST PRESS IS PERMITTED TO REPORT AND EDITORIALIZE ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE WASHINGTON TALKS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, CENSORSHIP, COMMUNISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE13250
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750341-0724
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751088/aaaadaol.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 NEW DELHI 13251
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <25 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OI CENSORS THE COMMUNIST PRESS ON CRITICAL ECONOMIC ISSUES
TAGS: PFOR, IN, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006